

## Winnemem Wintu tribe lives in the shadow of Shasta Dam

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For the Winnemem Wintu, the 75th anniversary of Shasta Dam is not something to celebrate.

It's a painful reminder of the tribe's past, said Caleen Sisk, the tribe's chief and spiritual leader.

When the dam was built and Lake Shasta inundated large portions of the McCloud River, the Winnemem had to move from their ancestral home along the river.

Sisk said the U.S. government promised them like lands elsewhere to live and the infrastructure to rebuild, but it never happened.

"We lost our rights, we lost our lands. And now, that's a cause for celebration?" Sisk said. "We only have broken promises."

In 1937, a year before construction started, the government took 4,800 acres the Winnemem say were allotted to them, along with hundreds of thousands of acres of communal tribal lands to be flooded by Lake Shasta.

Since then, Sisk and other members of the tribe have been fighting for compensation. Since 1985, the government hasn't even recognized the Winnemem as a tribe.

Thirty members of the tribe live on a 42-acre Winnemem compound in Jones Valley.

Tribe members also are concerned about the proposal to raise the height of Shasta Dam another 181/2 feet. They say the higher lake level would inundate many sacred cultural and religious sites along the McCloud River.

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of construction starting on Shasta Dam, the tribe is showing three documentary films about the tribe's struggles: "Standing on Sacred Ground Pilgrims and Tourists" and "Surviving Shasta Dam: Dancing Salmon Home" and "Over Troubled Water."

"Standing on Sacred Ground" was shown Saturday. "Dancing Salmon Home" and "Over Troubled Water" will be shown Sunday and Thursday at the John Beaudet Community Center in Shasta Lake.

"Standing on Sacred Ground" is a four-part documentary on the struggles of eight native communities around the world. The first episode is about the Winnemem and indigenous people of the Altai Republic of Russia.

Both groups are fighting massive government projects — the Winnemem's efforts to oppose raising the height of Shasta Dam and the Altaians' struggles to stop construction of a gas pipeline.

"Dancing Salmon Home" is the story of the Winnemem's journey to New Zealand to meet with their "long-lost salmon relatives." During the 1800s, salmon eggs from a fish hatchery on the McCloud River were introduced to rivers in New Zealand.

The ancestors of those fish, who the Winnemem consider their relatives, have survived.

During their visit to New Zealand, the Winnemem held four days of ceremonies with members of the Maori tribes there.

"Over Troubled Waters" is documentary about the water wars surrounding by the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the forces behind California's water policies.

If you go

In commemoration of the 75th anniversary of Shasta Dam, the Winnemem Wintu are showing two documentary movies this week.

What: "Dancing Salmon Home" and "Over Troubled Waters."

When: 6 p.m. Sunday and 7 p.m. Thursday.

Where: John Beaudet Community Center, 3150 Ashby Court in Shasta Lake.

Information: There is a \$7 suggested donation. There will be a question-and-answer session with filmmaker Will Doolittle and a Wintu tribe member.

- **Caption:** Members of the Winnemem Wintu tribe participate in a coming-of-age ceremony in July for Alicia Scholfield, 16, of Redding, near the McCloud Bridge Campground on Lake Shasta. Tribal members are opposed to a plan to raise the height of Shasta Dam.
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